

INFORMATION FOR LIVING HISTORY REENACTORS
BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS ANNIVERSARY
AT CHALMETTE BATTLEFIELD
JEAN LAFITTE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVE
JANUARY 8-9, 2016



QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about being a living history reenactor at the Battle of New Orleans anniversary, contact Park Ranger Ron Merrill, ron_merrill@nps.gov, 504-382-4914.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CHALMETTE BATTLEFIELD IN JANUARY?

Each year in early January, the National Park Service remembers the January 8, 1815, Battle of New Orleans at Chalmette Battlefield, the very ground where it happened. The battlefield is now part of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, and events for 2016 are planned for Friday-Sunday, January 8-10.

The tentative schedule (as of September 4, 2015) for the event is:

Friday, January 8

- 8:30 a.m. – all living history reenactors on battlefield and ready for day; all non-NPS vehicles off the battlefield
- 9:00 a.m. – Battlefield and visitor center open to public, including school field trips (2000-2500 students generally participate).
- 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m. - Living history encampment, “Battle of New Orleans University” programs featuring speakers, craft demonstrations, hands-on activities, music, etc.
- 9:30 a.m. – reveille/raise American and British flags.
- Beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 2:00 p.m., artillery and small arms firings on hour and half hour.
- 3:30 p.m. – wreath-laying/commemoration ceremony at Chalmette Monument. Visitor center closes when ceremony begins.
- After ceremony, retreat/lower American and British flags.
- After flags lowered, battlefield closes to public (approximately 5:00 p.m.)

Saturday, January 9

- 8:30 a.m. – all living history reenactors on battlefield and ready for day; all non-NPS vehicles off the battlefield
- 9:00 a.m. – Battlefield and visitor center open to public.
- 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. – Living history encampment, “Battle of New Orleans University” programs featuring speakers, craft demonstrations, hands-on activities, music, etc.
- 9:30 a.m. – reveille/raise American and British flags.
- Beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 2:00 p.m., artillery and small arms firings on hour and half hour.
- 3:00 p.m. - retreat/lower American and British flags.
- 4:00 p.m. – Battlefield and visitor center close.

Sunday, January 10

- 8:00-9:00 a.m. – catered on-site farewell breakfast for Chalmette Battlefield living history participants.
- 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. – battlefield and visitor center open to the public. A concert is planned for the afternoon.





HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN LIVING HISTORY EVENTS

As in January 2015, there are two different locations for living history reenactor events in January 2016. Events at Chalmette Battlefield are hosted by the National Park Service; events at the Meraux Living History Park are hosted by the Louisiana Living History Foundation and the 7th US Infantry Living History Association. Note that you CANNOT apply to participate in both Chalmette Battlefield events and events at the Meraux Living History Park; you must choose one or the other.

You don't need to apply to participate as a living history reenactor if you simply want to attend Battle of New Orleans events at Chalmette Battlefield, either in period dress or in "civilian" clothes. The park looks forward to seeing you however you're dressed!

Here's how to participate in **Chalmette Battlefield events** in January 2016:

1. As a living history reenactor in a period encampment. Living history reenactors can set up period camps and camp overnight at the battlefield Thursday-Saturday nights (January 7-9) OR set up a period camp for day use only. To be a living history reenactor, read the rest of this document and fill out the living history reenactor application.
2. As a presenter or performer. During the Battle of New Orleans anniversary, Chalmette Battlefield will once again host Battle of New Orleans University, which will feature scheduled programs, period craft demonstrations, music, speakers, and hands-on activities. Information about being a presenter/performer can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/jela/battle-of-new-orleans-anniversary-at-chalmette-battlefield.htm>. You can apply to be a living history reenactor AND a presenter/performer, but you must fill out BOTH the living history reenactor application AND the presenter/performer application.

Here's how to participate in **Meraux Living History Park events** in January 2016:

The Louisiana Living History Foundation and the 7th US Infantry Living History Association will host an encampment and battle reenactments at the Meraux Living History Park (about 1.5 miles from Chalmette Battlefield) during the Battle of New Orleans anniversary. This is a separate event and a separate registration process from the Chalmette Battlefield events. You can register for the Meraux Living History Park events at www.neworleans1815.com. Some registrants for Meraux Living History Park events will be chosen by their event commander for activities at Chalmette Battlefield on Friday, January 8, so if you register for Meraux Living History Park events, let your event commander know if you are interested in battlefield activities.

TIMELINE FOR APPLYING TO PARTICIPATE AS A LIVING HISTORY REENACTOR AT CHALMETTE BATTLEFIELD EVENTS

Living history applications will be available at <http://www.nps.gov/jela/living-history-reenactors.htm> in mid-September. (The park is going green this year---all applications are online!)

- **Applications are due by Saturday, October 31.**
- When the park receives your application, you will be sent a confirmation email so that you will know your application has been received.
- You will receive notification from the park by Wednesday, November 18, whether your application has been accepted or not. When your application is accepted, you will be considered a registered participant in Chalmette Battlefield events. Only registered participants will be allowed to set up period camps at Chalmette Battlefield. Registered participants will receive regular updates from the park.

ABOUT CHALMETTE BATTLEFIELD

Chalmette Battlefield is one of six sites of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, part of the National Park Service. The battlefield is located on the east bank of the Mississippi River about six miles downriver from Jackson Square, the heart of New Orleans' French Quarter. The physical (and mailing) address is 8606 West St. Bernard Highway, Chalmette LA 70043.

Chalmette is an unincorporated community in St. Bernard (Civil) Parish. The battlefield is a quiet and peaceful place these days, but it's only a 20-minute drive to the French Quarter, where you can find music, fabulous cuisine, Bourbon Street, and three centuries of history. St. Bernard Parish also offers fascinating history and good eating and is famous for its hospitality to Battle of New Orleans anniversary participants.



On the battlefield itself, you'll find a visitor center (newly built after Hurricane Katrina and dedicated on January 8, 2011), the historic Malus-Beauregard House (built in the 1830s as a country house), and Chalmette Monument, a 100-foot-high obelisk honoring the troops of 1815. Though greatly reduced in size and depth, Rodriguez Canal is still on the battlefield, the only War of 1812 human artifact still readily visible. A reconstructed rampart stands behind it: located in embrasures along the rampart are reproduction artillery pieces, including one 18-pounder and two 6-pounders that are part of the historic weapons demonstration program. The Mississippi River flows on the other side of the levee from the battlefield, and in the area where British artillery once pounded the American position stands Chalmette National Cemetery, a Civil War-era cemetery that contains the graves of four participants from the War of 1812.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PORTRAYALS

Living history units and individuals representing participants in the Battle of New Orleans and the civilians who supported them are welcome to apply to participate in activities at Chalmette Battlefield. Sorry, no horses are allowed at Chalmette Battlefield events.

On the British side, appropriate units to represent include the 4th, 7th, 21st, 27th, 41st, 43rd, 44th, 85th, 89th, 93rd, and 95th Regiments of Foot, the 1st and 5th West India Regiments, the 14th Light Dragoons, British general staff, Royal Artillery, Royal Horse Artillery Rocket Troop, Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Engineers, and Royal Sappers and Miners. Other groups may also be appropriate; be sure to describe your unit on your application.

On the American side, appropriate units include the 7th and 44th US Infantry Regiments, Light Artillery Corps, US Marines, US Navy, 1st US Dragoons, Jean Lafitte's Baratarians, Hinds' Mississippi Mounted Rifles, free men of color battalions, the units making up Plauché's Battalion, Beale's Rifles, Jugeant's Choctaws, and the Louisiana, Tennessee and Kentucky militias. Other groups may also be appropriate; be sure to describe your unit on your application.

Reenactors representing civilians of the period are also welcome. Be sure to describe your portrayal on your application.

HISTORIC AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity guidelines for the Battle of New Orleans anniversary events at Chalmette Battlefield will be the same as those used by the reenactors participating in activities at the Meraux Living History Park. You can read the authenticity guidelines at <http://www.neworleans1815.com/>.



Every reenactor should strive for and maintain historical accuracy and authenticity in period dress and accoutrements, character role portrayals, and demonstrations. Any determination made by park staff on historical authenticity and appropriateness is final.

The event at Chalmette Battlefield attempts to recreate a hastily-assembled military camp on both sides. Stay faithful to the impression you are portraying.

Historical authenticity standards will be observed and in effect during event hours on Friday and Saturday.

HISTORIC WEAPONS AND BLACK POWDER

There will be an extensive schedule of black powder demonstrations featuring artillery and small arms in both the British and American camps. The park will provide all black powder in prepared cartridges, whether for musket, rifle or artillery, for all firings at the battlefield. If you wish to bring an artillery piece, include it in your application in the “Other Information” section.

Note that on the firing line and in areas roped off for firings, the word of the National Park Service Black Powder Safety Officer is absolute.

A copy of the Chalmette Battlefield Standard Operating Procedure for Historic Weapons and Black Powder Safety will be provided to registered unit leaders. The park will use this document and other pertinent National Park Service guidelines and policies to make any decisions regarding historic weapons and black powder. The event Black Powder Safety Officer will have the final authority on any such decision. As always, safety is the primary concern.

For American units, the National Park Service prefers its own modified version of the Smyth drill. Other drills are appropriate for this period, and at the discretion of and with the approval of the event Black Powder Safety Officer, individual units may use the War of 1812 period manual to which they are most accustomed when firing and marching as a separate unit. Morning and evening formations in the American camp as well as any mass firing demonstrations will be conducted according to Smyth’s Manual. For British units, the corresponding regulation period musket and rifle drills for infantry will be used. Artillery drill will be conducted according to National Park Service regulations and safety modifications.

Before a unit (or any member thereof) can participate in any firing demonstration,

- The unit leader must sign the Black Powder Agreement certifying that he or she has read and understood the Black Powder Standard Operating Procedure and will comply with it fully
- All unit firearms must pass a safety inspection
- The unit must demonstrate its drill to the satisfaction of the event Black Powder Safety Officer. **Facilities for weapon maintenance and repair are extremely limited on site and there will be no time for training during the event.** If you have any questions about drills, weapons, and firing demonstrations, contact Park Ranger Ron Merrill, ron_merrill@nps.gov, 504-382-4914.

EDGED WEAPONS

- National Park Service policy states that edged weapons (swords, knives and bayonets) may be drawn and brandished in a safe and prudent manner when the bearer and the weapon are behind a barrier in a secure area out of reach of visitors.
- When NOT behind a barrier or when out amongst visitors, edged weapons may NOT be fully drawn. They may be drawn out of the scabbard enough to expose some of the blade for visual inspection for interpretive purposes, but no visitor may touch the blade.
- When not behind a barrier, bayonets may be fixed on muskets but the muskets must be kept in a vertical position and the bearer must maintain control of the weapon and the bayonet. At no time may muskets be fired with the bayonet fixed.
- **At no time may participants engage in combat with edged weapons or simulated edged weapons without the express permission and consent of the event Black Powder Safety Officer.**

USEFUL INFORMATION



PERIOD CAMPS, PETS, SLEEPING, AND VEHICLES

- **Period camps** must be set up no later than Thursday, January 7, and must stay in place through 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 9. Period camps may be used as sleeping quarters or for day use only. Historic authenticity standards will apply to period camps. Note that you or your unit may apply to participate in battlefield events even if you do not apply for a period camp.
- **Overnight camping** at Chalmette Battlefield is only allowed for registered living history participants in period camps.
- **Camp locations** will be as follows: American camps will be set up along Battlefield Road. British camps will be set up on the battlefield (not the Mississippi River) side of the Malus-Beauregard House. Civilians will be assigned appropriate areas depending on their portrayals.
- There will be **camp facilitators** assigned to period camps. The camp facilitators will be the go-to people for all questions and problems; if they can't answer a question, they'll know who can.
- Note that **no participant vehicles** will be allowed on the battlefield during event hours.
- Participants will have a **designated parking area** in Chalmette National Cemetery next to the battlefield; shuttles will provide transportation between the parking area and the battlefield.
- For those looking for a **hotel** room, check the accommodations listings in St. Bernard Parish <http://www.visitstbernard.com/> or at the New Orleans Convention and Visitor Bureau website <http://www.neworleanscvb.com/>
- For those looking for **RV and camping** accommodations, there are several state parks in the Chalmette/New Orleans area; visit the Louisiana State Parks website <http://www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/> Visit <http://www.neworleanscvb.com/> for commercial campground information.
- **No pets** will be allowed on the battlefield Thursday, January 7, through Saturday, January 9. Pets may not be left unattended in vehicles in the participant parking area.
- National Park Service rangers will be in charge of **emergency services** during the Battle of New Orleans anniversary event. Registered participants will receive information about on-site emergency services, who to contact if emergencies arise, and an emergency number to leave with friends or family if they need to reach you during the event.

FOOD AND DRINK

- **Free hot and cold drinks and light snacks** will be available for registered living history participants, park volunteers, and park staff on Friday and Saturday.
- **Rations** for campfire cooking will be provided for registered living history participants for Friday and Saturday lunch.
- **No alcoholic beverages** may be consumed on site during event hours.
- Registered living history participants will be provided with a catered **farewell buffet breakfast** on the battlefield 8:00-9:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 10. Note that the battlefield and visitor center are currently scheduled to open to the public at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 10, so plan to clear your camp by 11:00 a.m.



SUPPLIES

- The park will provide **drinking water, portable toilets, dry firewood, and bedding straw.**
- The park will provide all **black powder** to be used at the battlefield. Do not bring black powder to the battlefield grounds (see Historic Weapons and Black Powder section above).

THE BIG PICTURE

Why do we commemorate the Battle of New Orleans every year? Your interest in history means that you understand the importance of the battle in American history---but not everyone does. Each year, the park's goal is for visitors to go away with an understanding of why the War of 1812 was important to its contemporaries and how it shaped the world we live in. For park visitors, this is an interpretive program, one that explains why the Battle of New Orleans is important to their lives and why Chalmette Battlefield is relevant *today*.



Remember that though sharing facts is important, it's not enough. Even when done well, a recitation of facts leaves the audience to wonder, "Why should I *care*?" Think about why you care about history: because you can see yourself reflected in the lives of those who went before, because an event uprooted a family member or provided a new opportunity, because you can see how the results of a battle fought two centuries ago altered the way your country is perceived today. Think about what has touched your heart and mind---that's probably what will touch the hearts and minds of the public too.